

Come, Know Jesus at The Cross

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[0:00] Please take your Bibles and turn to John's Gospel. John's Gospel, John 13.

We're going to John 13. Excuse me. I didn't swallow the microphone this time, that's good. John 13. What's that? Yeah, right. There's nothing in there, right? John 13, in that black Bible in the chair in front of you, you can pull that out and go to the back and find page 84.

Page 84 in that black Bible, John 13. And this will close off this part for the year. John 13, 1 through 17. Next Sunday I'm going to do a Christmas message and then the Sunday after that I'm going to do Psalm 150.

Psalm 150. And then we'll start back in in John's Gospel. Excuse me, January 8th. So this will finish off this section, which is good because this kind of a springboard into this section in John's Gospel, John's chapters 13 through 16 where Jesus' ministry goes from being the public ministry to the private ministry with his disciples.

[1:23] The only place you'll find this part is in John's Gospel. You don't see it in the synoptics, Matthew, Mark, or Luke. You see it here in John's Gospel where John spends a huge amount of time teaching his disciples.

So we'll begin here, John 13, 1 through 17, before Judas leaves to follow through with what he wanted to do. So John 13, 1 through 17.

And before the feast of the Passover, Jesus, knowing that his hour had come, knowing that he should depart from this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

And during supper, the devil, having already put into the heart, in order that Judas Iscariot of Simon would betray him, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and he'd come from God and go back to God, rose from supper.

He laid aside his garments and taken a towel. He wrapped it around himself. Then he poured water into the basin, and he began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which he was girded.

[2:42] And then he came to Simon Peter. He said to him, Lord, did you wash my feet? Jesus answered and said to him, What I myself do, you yourself, do not understand now.

But you'll understand after these things. Peter said to him, Never for all eternity will you wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I do not wash you, you have no part with me.

Simon Peter said to him, Lord, not my feet only, but also the hands and the head. Jesus said to him, The one who's bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is clean, holy.

And you are clean, but not all. For he knew the one who was going to betray him. For this reason he said, Not all of you are clean. Verse 12.

And then when he finished, excuse me, when he washed their feet, he took his garments, and he reclined again. He said to them, Do you know what I've done to you?

[3:51] You call me teacher and Lord, and you speak well, for I am. Therefore, if I washed your feet, the Lord and the teacher, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

For an example I gave to you, that you should also do as I did to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, neither an apostle greater than the one who sent him.

If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. Isn't it interesting that in our culture, it's acceptable, and in some cases maybe expected, but acceptable, for women to make their feet look all pretty, but not men.

And yet sometimes you think maybe men should do that. I mean, women get their toenails done, you know, they're painted, they look so nice, but you don't expect that from men, but like I said, maybe men should do that.

It's like kind of disgusting. Men's feet. Well, actually, even in the midst of something where we make the feet look all pretty, there's still a slight sense that feet are disgusting.

[5:16] For some people, they're just flat out disgusting, like, I just don't want anything to do with your feet. Just get away from me. It's just yuck, you know? You know, even in the Middle East today, feet are considered filthy and undignified.

If there's a stomping on something with their feet, or a person throwing their shoes at like a leader, or someone else, that's a huge insult in the Middle East.

And then you read this passage, and you're shocked. Because if you think feet are dirty in the 21st century, just think about how dirty they were in the first century.

I don't think Nike was in play at that day. Or at that day. I don't think you can find a Skechers manufacturing plant anywhere.

They were scarce. They just had these little things that covered their feet with little ties on, so feet would be filthy, dirty, sweaty. And you see Jesus doing this.

[6:30] And yet, something even more shocking would be Jesus going to the cross. And that's what this foot washing would represent.

Would be Jesus going to the cross. And you'll notice, I kind of changed, not changed, I edited the title for John's Gospel.

And we've said this, come know Jesus, come receive Jesus, come believe into Jesus, come trust Jesus. But here, in John, chapters 13 through 16, even 17, you could put that in there as well.

Jesus is specifying his ministry to his disciples. And yes, as Christians, we should receive Jesus or we should trust Jesus. But when you say, come know Jesus, you say to someone who doesn't know Jesus, come to know Jesus.

But even as Christians, we continue in our knowledge of Jesus. We grow to know Jesus even more. So come know Jesus.

[7:40] We'll see that edited version in chapters 13 through 17 in John's Gospel over the next few weeks. And today we'll see we come know Jesus at the cross.

Come know Jesus at the cross. At the cross. This foot washingness is what this act would symbolize what Jesus would do what he would do at the cross.

The deepest way we know Jesus as his followers is at the cross. It cleanses us and it's also our mission as his followers.

in that we're called to serve each other the way Christ served us. Jesus acted out the cross by washing his disciples' feet.

Jesus acted out the cross by washing the disciples' feet. Here's the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, the Son of Man. Remember the phrase Son of Man means glory, power, rulership.

[8:52] God himself knelt down in humble service to serve his followers to wash their feet. This is the radical gospel which calls for a radical response as well.

We embrace Christ's service to us at the cross and then we go serve others in that same way. Christ is our servant who washed our feet by going to the cross.

And we're called to receive his service and then go and do likewise. And when we obey him in serving others like that, you're blessed.

Again, in this section of John's gospel, the focus is now upon Jesus with his disciples. is directed towards a deeper love for Jesus. And then you also see our mission as his followers.

And as we go through these chapters, you're going to notice things directed specifically at the 11 disciples and then also other aspects will be specified to all disciples in general.

[10:10] So we're going to have to put our thinking caps on when we go through this to see which aspect means for the 11 and which aspects are for us, all of his disciples. So here begins this time where Jesus ministers to his disciples.

And there's going to be five aspects about the cross that the text shows us. So here's aspect number one that I want to make known to you. Number one, God's sovereignty over and love at the cross.

God's sovereignty over the cross and God's love at the cross. And verses one through three. And I want you to notice notice something where it says and before the feast of the Passover Jesus, knowing that his hour had come.

And then notice verse three. Knowing that the Father had given all things to his hands, he'd come from God, he would go to God. Look at how this part, it begins and ends, verse one and verse

three, begins and ends with God in control.

Jesus is in control. Jesus is sovereign over what's happening. This is not something that's going haphazardly.

[11:37] This is not something where it's accidental or just coincidental. Jesus has everything under control. The hour is the time where he goes to the cross.

And then it says he goes to the Father. God is in control. Notice too, he talks about his love for his disciples and how Judas would betray him but again it ends in he's in control.

The Father gave all things to his hands. He's in control. He came from God. He's going back to God. You see God's sovereignty and his love at the cross.

So let's walk through these first three verses. Notice. Now before the feast of the Passover here's a brief synopsis of what took place before the feast. Jesus, he knew his hour had come in order that he should depart out of this world to the Father.

Public ministry is done. His private ministry begins for his sheep, his elect sheep. His hour of going to the cross had come and he would go out of this world to the Father.

[12:47] He would die, be glorified, die, be exalted. And then notice the last part of verse one. Here you see God's love at the cross.

Having loved his own who were in the world he loved them to the end. Jesus loved his own. Notice they're separate from the world. And he loved them to the end, that is, the end of his life.

And he would keep on loving his disciples. He would keep on loving all his disciples, wouldn't he?

And then, so notice this sharp contrast that John paints for us between Jesus' love for his own and the world for the mass of humanity.

God's love in Christ we see here was not for the lost world but for his disciples. His elect sheep, the focus was on them.

And he would soon show his great love for them by washing their feet. But then notice what happens, verse two. And now it's during the supper, during the Passover meal, the devil having already put into the heart in order that Judas Iscariot of Simon would betray him.

[14:09] During the time they're enjoying the Passover meal, as God was working his full plan, here Satan is working his plan, under God's control obviously. He put it in the heart of Judas already to betray him.

He would fulfill his purpose, his plot was truly satanic, and notice the contrast is painted even here from verse two, excuse me, verse one and verse two where you see the father's love for his own and the devil's work.

And yet, John stops, stops you so that way you're not under the impression that everything is happening out of control. Verse three, knowing that the father had given all things to his hands, and he come from God and was going to God.

Ah, he rounds this off for you to make sure you see all things were in Jesus' hands, he came from God, he's going back to God, God is both loving and sovereign.

You see that, I hope you see that. Over all that would happen, it was all part of the father's plan.

And John's trying to emphasize that to you, to us as his readers.

[15:30] God was sovereign over the cross and showed his love at the cross. So don't forget that. It's just one aspect that John points out to us.

Here's a second aspect that we'll see. Foot washing, the enactment of the cross. Foot washing is the enactment of the cross, or in other words, it's the cross acted out.

He's acting out the cross by washing his disciples' feet. Verse 4 and 5. He rose from supper, he laid aside his garments, he removed his outer garments and he dressed himself in a towel, he put on the garments of a slave.

Notice too, he laid aside his garments, he would lay aside his life for his sheep, it's not by accident that John tells us this. And they would be lying on these thin mats with a low table, there were no chairs, he would lie down, and they would have their feet away from the table, leaning on the arm, most likely the left, eating with the right.

He girded himself, and then verse 5, and he poured water into the basin, and he began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which he was girded.

[17:03] Foot washing. Foot washing was the most demeaning task given to one of the household slaves because the feet would be filthy, dirty, sweaty.

I mean, sweat would just be all over the feet so then they would collect the dirt, and it would stick on the feet. It's like you just want to start dry heaving right now.

And in a cultural sense, feet are disgusting, even today, still in the Middle East like I brought up to you earlier. So, doing such work was not just doing the work of a slave.

It was work which was never, never, never done by a superior to inferiors. Never.

That would not ever happen. It's the opposite. The inferiors would do it to the superiors. The slave would do that for the king.

[18:06] The slave would do that for the master of the house. No, the opposite. Jesus is violating social customs in such a huge, major way.

And think about it. Notice, none of his disciples thought about washing the feet of their, as Jesus will call himself, teacher and lord.

None of them did that. As a matter of fact, you can go back into the synoptic gospels, and they were too busy arguing about who was the greatest. And then you see Jesus doing this.

This would shock them. To see their teacher and lord do such a shameful, low, slave-like, scandalous act.

he broke all social taboos, almost to the embarrassment of his disciples. But, it would be a symbol of his salvific cleansing, what he do at the cross, and a model of Christian conduct for all of Jesus' disciples.

[19:31] disciples. And, there's another part to foot washing. It happened within the context of hospitality. You'd be hospitable to the person, showing generosity.

But also, it was for preparation. Jesus enacted who they would become as his disciples. They were about to begin, as one writer put it, a specific task, experience, and relationship would take place. It would be an act of service. service. So, understand, as Jesus did this act of foot washing, he was, in reality, enacting, or acting out, if you would, the cross.

Here is the superior washing the feet of the inferiors, and here's Jesus the king dying on behalf of sinners. You see? Now, here's a third point, third aspect.

from the text. Number three, we need Jesus cleansing through the cross. And we're talking initially then daily.

[20:43] We need Jesus cleaning through the cross, initially and daily. Initially then daily. That's in verses 6 through 11.

Notice what happens. he came to Simon Peter. Simon Peter said to him, and this is how it is in the Greek, and he probably spoke out loud what the other disciples were thinking, as they were all shaken over Jesus' action.

From the Greek, it's, Lord, are you going to wash my feet? He objected because this was scandalous.

You, your superior, going to wash my and inferior feet? No way, Lord. And then, so you read this, you're like, oh, wow, Peter, he has such concern for Jesus.

Wow, that's so humble of him. No, it's not. His objection was not rooted in modesty or out of concern for Jesus.

[21:53] It was flat out disobedience and self-righteousness. Do not think well of Peter at this point, of his action and of his attitude. No, my friends, it was pure self-righteousness, pure disobedience.

As a matter of fact, Peter was rejecting God's grace right here. Peter, that's the point. You're correct.

Yeah, you don't deserve it. That's why it's called grace. I mean, think about it. We just looked at foot washing.

Is the enactment of the cross, is the cross being acted out so foot washing was the enactment of the cross. He was rejecting the cross, wasn't he?

Look at Jesus' response, verse 7. He answered and said to him, what I myself do, you yourself do not understand. Now he emphasized now. Peter, you're going to emphasize? I'm going to emphasize.

[23:00] But you understand after these things, and these things, excuse me, refers not simply to after he washed their feet, but the things that will follow, the cross, his resurrection, his glorification.

Then look at Peter, verse 8. Peter said to him, and this is from Greek, never for all eternity will you wash my feet.

perish, it's kind of a strong statement. Perish even the thought, Lord. But what Jesus would do, remember what foot washing symbolized, what Jesus would do would be for all eternity, and would keep Peter from perishing forever.

And that's the emphasis even for us today when we think about the cross because it humbles us. Because every part of our selfish lives repudiates this idea of Christ coming to serve us. No, we're supposed to serve Christ, right? No. He served us.

[24 : 23] Jesus didn't need us to serve him. serve us. So we must let Christ serve us.

We need Jesus cleansing through the cross. We need that. We let Christ serve us, we obey his lordship, and then we follow his example.

And look at Jesus, corrects Peter right here. He answered him here in verse 8, if I do not wash you, you have no part with me. If I do not wash your feet, you have no share with me.

This is the truth about this I-you relationship, Peter. To deny any part of it is denying all of it. It's a part of your relationship with me, Peter.

It's a part of our relationship with Christ. We need the Lamb of God to take away our sin at the cross. That's what he does initially.

[25 : 31] There's the initial cleansing that takes place at the cross. Ah, Peter. Puts his foot in his mouth again.

Look at verse 9. Time of here is that, no, not my feet alone, but also the hands and the head. Still didn't get it.

As a matter of fact, he thought he had to modify or correct what Jesus offered him. So what, Jesus is not enough?

And he needed you to modify everything, Peter. He needed you to clarify things better. Thank you, Peter. No, look what Jesus does.

He corrects him here again. Verse 10. No, no, Peter. Peter, the one who is bathed needs only to wash his feet but is completely clean and you are clean. No, Peter, this foot washing is one aspect of a much deeper fulling cleansing.

[26 : 35] I've already done for you. I've already done to you. It's the cleansing of the cross. You've bathed, this speaks in general referring to the whole body, and then he says washing the feet refers to one part of the body.

I've already washed you, Peter. I've washed you at the cross. You're cleansed through the cross initially. Christ's sacrificial and sin atoning death is already applied to Peter and to the other disciples.

Those for whom Christ died already belong to him. I've already washed you, Peter. You're good. God need the cleansing through the cross. We need that.

So this bath applies to all of Jesus' true disciples, all of those who follow him. This is our relationship with Jesus. Now we're cleansed, you're clean. Christ's initial cleansing is a once for all act.

You don't need another one. His atoning work was once and for all. You don't need to be done again and again and again and again. Now you should bathe every day.

[27 : 46] I hope you do that. Pray you do that. But here with Jesus you don't need to do that every day. Once cleansed from sin we stand righteous in God's sight. Yet we need a continual cleansing but only the cleansing of the feet.

We need to continue to renew our love for Christ. There's an initial cleansing but then there's a daily cleansing renewal of trusting Christ to remind ourselves what he's done for us.

So the foot washing symbolizes death on the cross and denotes our continuing relationship with Christ. That's what we see. So we receive Christ's continual washing on a daily basis which is the sharing of the practices and life of his body of the church.

It's the way we continue to cultivate our relationship with our Lord. three ways actually. Spending time in the word, spending time in prayer, and then with the body where we're seeing baptism taking place and then we renew our commitment to him as we take the Lord's supper together. And we're prepared for humble service. We'll see that pretty soon where foot washing symbolizes cleansing and humble service. So now we're coming here to the end of verse 10.

[29 : 12] I want to say something here about this whole foot washing thing because there's some within Christianity, Plymouth Brethren, some Mennonite groups, they actually believe that they teach this, that you actually have three ordinances.

you have baptism, you have the Lord's supper, and they also practice foot washing. So when you take the Lord's supper, they actually do foot washing. They think that's another ordinance.

We don't take that view like it's like baptism, like the Lord's supper. Instead, we think it refers to Jesus and what he's done for us by God showing us his generous hospitality going to the cross. And it refers to what we must do in Christ as his followers. We wash each other's feet. So, Jesus' true disciples have received his salvation cleansing by trusting him.

Initially, and then it continues on a daily basis where our feet are cleansed. But then, look at what Jesus says at the end of verse 10. But not all.

[30:21] Verse 11, for he knew the one who was going to betray him. For this reason he said, not all of you are clean. not all of them have been bathed in Christ, which tells us something.

It tells us that regardless of the kind of action, whether you do the ritual of baptism, you do the ritual of the Lord's Supper, you do the ritual of foot washing, a person will not be cleansed unless Christ actually does the cleansing on the inside.

He already knew that Judas would betray him. In previous verses, and we as readers, we know that already too, right?

John has told us this, so we're aware of that. So we need Christ's cleansing through the cross, and it's initially and also daily.

Here's a fourth aspect. Number four, we follow Jesus' example at the cross. We follow Jesus' example at the cross.

[31:30] Verses 12 through 16. Verse 12, he washed their feet, he put his own garments on, he reclined again, and they said to him, you guys know what I've done?

It was a time now to teach them the significance of what he'd just done by first asking them if they understood what he'd just done. Guys, there's something deeper here.

Do you guys know what just happened? Now this act shocked the disciples, but they would be even more shocked that their Lord would hang on the cross a hideous, shameful, scandalous cross, a death for only those people who are damned.

But here's the reality. The reality is this, the superior, holy, great, majestic, exalted Messiah takes the role of a despised slave and inferior all for the good of others, the good of his elect sheep.

that's the essence of the gospel. The superior takes the role of a slave and inferior for the good of others to save people.

[32:58] So if you're here and you don't know Christ, that's what he does. The superior takes on the role of an inferior to save people, to give you, to bring you grace and to give you forgiveness of all your sins when you repent and trust him.

Come, repent and trust Christ and he'll save you. You'll receive his love and his grace. That's the essence of this.

So he says, do you guys understand what just happened? Look at verse 13. You call me teacher and Lord. Yes, that's who I am. You speak well.

I am the teacher and in more ways than what you guys were realized. I am the Lord. But did you listen to what I just did?

Did you see what I just did? Are you hearing me? Verse 13, excuse me, verse 14. Therefore if I wash your feet, the Lord and the teacher, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

[34:08] So here it is. Again, we follow Jesus example at the cross. If I, as your superior, wash your feet, then you should also wash one another's feet.

What he did, he expected them to do to each other. I mean, it's illogical, it's absurd that a superior would serve an inferior in this way.

But Jesus says, if I did this, you should go and do likewise. Yes, this was unthinkable for him to act or enact this way.

But that was his mission. And it's our mission too. We go and serve. the cross.

There's three parts of his foot washing. There's the cross, there's a communion, and then there's a commission. We're called to treat each other with that same kind of grace, love, and hospitality.

[35:16] It's our mission now too. And it's our mission in two ways, actually. It's our mission to each other, and it's our mission to the world. We go and serve the world, the message of the cross.

the message of Christ at the cross. You see that? We follow his example. Notice verse 15. For an example I gave to you that you should also do as I did to you.

Here's the pattern. Here's the model. The one who sees Jesus as one who's served him or her will be able to set him as an example.

See, he can't be your example if he's not first-year superior. He can't be your example if he's not first-year savior. He can't be your example if he's not first-year lord.

He served you, you received that, so now I go serve. And then look at what he says, verse 16.

Here's an important statement, truly, truly to say to you, authoritative statement, authoritative statement on hand.

[36 : 23] He says, listen, listen. A slave is not greater than his master, neither an apostle greater than the one who sent him.

If the master of the slave and the one who sent the sent one faces shame, so must the ones who are his disciples face shame.

We're slaves to each other and to the world. our identity in Christ, we're slaves of Christ, our mission is found in Christ, so we're slaves to each other and we're slaves to the world.

We serve each other, we serve the world, we serve each other with this love and we say to the world, come, find grace at the cross. And that's what Jesus says.

So, if this is who we are, what right do we have to think? That we would be exempt from any of the tasks undertaken by Jesus himself.

[37 : 32] Or put another way, what right do we have to judge any task to be menial or even beneath us all the while our master has already performed it himself?

Is there any task for you as a follower of Jesus that's too menial for you? If you think that, you're wrong.

Jesus, the superior, did the most menial, shameful, scandalous work washing someone's dirty, sweaty feet, which is a display of his love at the cross.

The superior becomes an inferior and dies like an inferior. See? So, what makes us think we have any right to judge any task to be menial for us?

Go and do likewise. we follow Christ's example at the cross. You see? So you had first point, second point, third point, fourth aspect that we've seen from the text, and now it ends here, verse 17, the fifth aspect.

[39 : 00] Number five, we're blessed for serving like the cross. Verse 17, if you know these things, you're blessed if you do them. If a disciple of Jesus understands these things, that is what Jesus has done for him, and they go and do it, you will experience God's grace.

You're going to be blessed. If you understand and do the service like Christ, you'll find grace. He will bless you. And it doesn't mean you're going to have lots of money.

That's not what he's talking about. You'll be given grace. Find grace. You'll be blessed. So Jesus taught with action by enacting his cross work in washing his disciples' feet.

This act that he did, oops, this act that he did not only displayed not only the humble sacrifice and service of our Lord, but also depicts true Christian discipleship, which is Christ-like sacrifice and service towards each other.

washing his disciples' feet displayed his role as a servant who would serve his disciples by going to the cross. He is a superior who died for inferiors, initiates the role of us as his disciples.

[40 : 27] This is our role now. Christian discipleship is now defined by Jesus' act of foot washing. Christian discipleship, we can now define Christian discipleship.

What does it mean to be a disciple of Christ? What does it mean? You follow in the footsteps of Jesus who washed his disciples' feet, which is an illustration of the cross.

And so we're prepared for service, and then now we serve each other, serving one another in love as Paul says. We serve each other, the other disciples, disciples, and then we serve the world, the message of Christ.

We serve the world. This is Christ at the cross. Come and know him. See? Christ washed my feet. We now must wash each other's feet. We're called to have lives of service to each other. we receive that initial cleansing, and then we receive his daily washing of the cross, reminding ourselves he's cleansed us from all our sins as we repent as we confess it.

[41 : 47] And we actively serve as he served. So, the deepest way we know Jesus as his followers is at the cross.

He cleanses us, and it's also our mission as his followers. In that, we're called to serve each other the way Christ served us. So, here's the foot washing.

It's acting out the cross, and we're cleansed through it, initially and then daily. And then we follow his example. We're serving each other, we're serving the world, and when we do that, we're blessed.

that's what you see taught here in John's gospel, 13, 1 through 17. And so, let's take some time, let's pray, ask our Lord to penetrate that into our hearts as his people.

And we do pray for that, Father, that you by your spirit would work in us. A great way to close out this year.

[42:58] Closing out this year, we'll begin a new year. We come to know you at the cross. You washed our feet.

The superior dying for us, the inferiors. You showed us your grace. You've cleansed us to the cross. And we daily keep going back to the cross. And we want to follow your example at the cross.

Serving each other. Serving the food of the word, the message of the truth to this world.

So we pray for us as a church, that we would love each other in the way that you loved us.

And we'll take the meal of the word, the message of grace, and serve this to the world and say, come, know Jesus who died for sinners.

[44:22] Help us to be this as a church. Spirit, work in us, we pray. And I encourage you, take these next few moments to fill your mind with God's truth, to pray that God will work in us as a body, serving each other, serving the world.

Pray to that and for you and for the body, that we would be a people that displays this and shows this, lives this passage out.

So, take some time between you and the Lord and do that now, would you please? Let's take some time between you and the Lord and do that now, would you please?

Thank you.